Corrected Transcript

Interview with **DELANO LEWIS**
Interviewed by Gladys Mack

Del Lewis came to DC in the 1960s to work in the Justice Department. Later he went to Africa with the Peace Corps. In 1971, he began working for DC Delegate to Congress Walter Fauntroy. He joined C & P Telephone Company (now Verizon) in 1973 as Public Affairs Manager and in 1974 he ran for an at large seat on the DC City, but lost. He supported Barry's campaign for Mayor in 1978 and was head of the Transition Committee after his election. Del worked for C & P for 21 years, after which he was President and CEO of National Public Radio and later served as US Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa.

Date of Interview: August 13, 2015

INTERVIEWER: Okay. My name is Gladys Mack, and I am doing this interview for the purpose of the oral history of the Marion Barry 1978 campaign. The recording will be publicly available in the George Washington University Gelman Library.

My first question is, who are you?

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Would you say your name and spell it—

DELANO LEWIS: Right.

INTERVIEWER:—and talk a little bit about yourself?

DELANO LEWIS: My name is Delano Lewis, D-e-l-a-n-o, L-e-w-i-s. And during my time in Washington, D.C., I was known as Del Lewis, D-e-l. And I came here in 1963 to work as a lawyer with the Department of Justice under Bobby Kennedy, and JFK [John F. Kennedy] was the President. And I went to undergrad and law school at the University of Kansas, so my first job out of law school was here in Washington. And it was quite momentous because I came on my birthday, November 12, 1938, and we all know what happened on November 22, 1963. I said I came on my birthday. I was born November 12, 1938. I came on my birthday, November 12, 1963.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

DELANO LEWIS: And we know what happened on November 22, 1963, when our President was assassinated.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely.

DELANO LEWIS: So it was really quite traumatic for me as well as the country and the world because I came here because of the Kennedys. The U.S. Attorney for the State of Kansas was a Kennedy friend, and his administrative assistant had been my next-door neighbor in law school, and she was the one who recommended me to interview with him for the Honors Program of the Department of Justice. And I'm going to law school, married with one child the first year, the second child the third year and working 40 hours a week, and I said I'm not an honors student, I'm doing okay, but in any event, Mr. George—his name was Newell George—he had been a Congressman from Kansas City and lost his bid for reelection, so the President appointed him U.S. Attorney, and he wrote a letter to Bobby Kennedy, he was a real Kennedy friend, and said, "I wish you could meet this young man, Delano Lewis, because he would have been a honor student if he hadn't worked 40 hours to support his family," and so on. Well, Bobby agreed with him, and I came here to work for the Department of Justice.

INTERVIEWER: Wow. Great story. I see that you just published a book, and before we get into the Marion Barry recollection, why don't you talk a little bit about your book and the impetus for that.

DELANO LEWIS: The impetus came from my family, Gayle, my spouse, and we met in college and married right after college, and so we've been together now 55 years—

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful.

DELANO LEWIS: —with 4 sons and 11 grandchildren. And she said, you know, "You really should write down your life experiences," and the kids, the sons, were saying the same, so that they could get a sense of who I am and for the grandchildren to have a sense of my life. And so I wasn't—I kept procrastinating, and it was only until Gayle pushed Brian, who's the third son, who had written a book about his life, and she had written two books about our Peace Corps experiences, that she talked to Brian and said, "Maybe if you asked your father, he might consider it." And so they didn't know how I was going to react, and I thought it was a great idea.

So Brian helped me, along with Gayle, and we spent over almost 2 years putting it together, and he was the one that had the thought of working with a firm that would help us not only write it, but publish it, Best Seller Publishing company, and they have a system with Amazon Kindle, and it's just a great organization because he helped me focus—the owner of the firm is Rob Kosberg—he helped me focus the book. So the book is geared to 18- to 35-year-olds with how to discover your passion, connect with people, and succeed in life, and I use my life experiences as examples of how to do it. And so it's getting good review, and it's a best seller in four categories.

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful.

DELANO LEWIS: So I'm very excited about it.

INTERVIEWER: That's great. That sounds great. I look forward to reading it.

DELANO LEWIS: Well, thank you, thank you.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. So when did you first meet Marion Barry? Let's talk about that a little bit.

DELANO LEWIS: Yes. Just a little bit of background because I think it's important. The Kansas piece is very, very important. But I went from Justice to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission when it first opened its doors, and I was there for a year and a half, and then I went to the Peace Corps in Nigeria and Uganda and stayed 3 years, and then came back, and I worked for Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts as a legislative assistant, and that's where the story begins with Marion because Walter Fauntroy was running for office in 1971, I came back in '69 for Uganda and start working for Senator Brooke, and Fauntroy was running for the delegate seat, the non-voting delegate seat, to the House from the District, and he won that seat. And as I got to know Walter later, it was so typical of Walter to hire everybody before he hired his chief of staff.

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: And so Walter had a lot of debts, political debts, to pay, and so he hired a lot of people, and then he said, "I need to get a chief of staff, and I would like that person to be an African American with some legislative experience and Capitol Hill experience." Well, there were very few of us on Capitol Hill at that time. So I decided—someone mentioned it, and I decided to apply, and went into Walter's office for an interview, and it was quite strange. He didn't spend much time with me. He said, "I want you to see three people. Okay? I want you to see John Hechinger [head of Hechinger's, a chain of DC area home improvement stores]; he's one of my strong supporters and helped me financially on my campaign. I want you to see Jim Gibson, he's with the Urban Institute. And I want you to see Marion Barry, he is running this organization called Pride at 14th and U." So I passed muster with John. I saw John Hechinger. I saw Jim Gibson.

And so I can remember the day that I had on my little suit and my skinny tie, and I'm going down to see this man that I had heard so much about. But I did a little research, and I didn't have the benefit of the Internet, but I did some research because I had this thought in my mind about Marion Barry and all the things that he had done with SNCC [Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee] and a few other things, and his civil rights leadership.

So there was, you know, a pretty imposing guy with his dashiki, and there I am in my little suit, and so we introduced ourselves, and I said, "Before we get started, didn't you go to the University of Kansas and work on your master's degree in chemistry?" He said—

[Telephone interruption.]

DELANO LEWIS: So I said, "Marion, didn't you go to the University of Kansas and work on your master's in chemistry?" He said, "How did you know that?"

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: I didn't know that myself.

DELANO LEWIS: Because, you know—I said—he said, "I did," and he said, "But Lawrence was so dull, I only spent about a semester."

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: But I knew it got him offbeat because it didn't fit the persona—

INTERVIEWER: Exactly.

DELANO LEWIS: —of Marion because I knew that he had this good reputation, I knew he was very smart, and I knew he had gone and gotten his undergrad and he was working on his master's degree at my alma mater, University of Kansas, and so we hit it off from that point and became very good friends over time.

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful, wonderful. Well, when did you actually learn that he was about to run for Mayor? And how did you get involved with that effort?

DELANO LEWIS: I decided to take this job—I did get hired by Walter Fauntroy—

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

DELANO LEWIS: —as well as his chief of staff, and I was there for—and a lot of this is in my book.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Oh, okay.

DELANO LEWIS: And so I worked for Walter for about maybe a year or so, and the Telephone Company came calling. As a matter of fact, Walter's office, at that time—we're talking '72—was the highest elected political office in town. There was no home rule for the city—

INTERVIEWER: Right.

DELANO LEWIS: —it was an appointed Mayor. And the legislative assistant in the office was Harley Daniels, and Harley said, "Have you met Chuck Weikel of the Telephone Company?" I said, "No, I haven't." He said, "Well, he's a University of Michigan grad [as Harley was himself], and he comes up here and talk," because if you've got any—for those of you who know about D.C. [in those days], if you had any business or corporate interests, you would come on the Hill because it was the [Congressional] District Committee that had oversight over the businesses because there was no [elected] local government.

INTERVIEWER: Right. Exactly.

DELANO LEWIS: So he said, "He comes up here all the time, and we chat, and he's very high on you, and don't be surprised if he calls you for lunch." And he did. And long story short, we went to lunch, and he kept talking to me about coming to the Telephone Company. And what's fascinating was he said one day there's going—this is the Telephone Company being very visionary—he said, "One day there is going to be an elected Mayor, elected City Council, there is going to be probably a regulatory commission that the utilities will have to report to, and we need someone in our organization that knows something about politics and knows something about—has a legal background like you," and so on, long story.

So I left Walter after about a year and a half and went to work as a public affairs manager for C&P Telephone. And I was on a track to be an executive in the company. They treated me extremely well. One of the first things I did was join Self-Determination for D.C., which was a local committee working on home rule, and I joined the Greater Washington Board of Trade. So my job was dealing with all the legislation and beginning to think about the regulatory environment for the Telephone Company, Chesapeake and Potomac Telephone Company.

And so the way I met Marion was after a year or so I decided in '74 after the home rule bill was passed, we helped work on the home rule bill, which is another story that I can get into, but the home rule bill was passed in '74, and I decided to run for office.

INTERVIEWER: Oh.

DELANO LEWIS: And I was living in Ward 3, and I'm pretty sure Polly Shackleton, who had been on the appointed Council, was probably going to run from Ward 3, and there were four at-large seats, but only two seats could be held by the majority party, it was a Democratic Party—

INTERVIEWER: Right.

DELANO LEWIS: —but I said I could get one of those seats and found out, lo and behold, that Marion Barry was going to run for an at-large seat on the City Council. Well, I said he could get one and I could get another.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

DELANO LEWIS: But there were nine of us running in the Democratic primary for two seats, and I came in close third to Reverend Douglas Moore. I had no name recognition. Marion Barry was thousands of votes ahead. Douglas Moore and I battled for that second slot on the Council, and Doug won by a few thousand votes. But that was my first—you know, I saw Marion on the campaign trail, and we were all running for the City Council in 1974.

INTERVIEWER: Right. So then you were still at the Telephone Company when this was happening?

DELANO LEWIS: Yes, which—and [many people] thought I was absolutely crazy because if I had won, I would have had to give up a job at the Telephone Company, and they had a plan for me as an executive, and I would have—they just didn't understand it, but I had this bent of wanting to be a political leader. So I lost, and we can talk about what happened after that.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Well, Marion then after 2 years in that seat on the Council, decided he was going to run for Mayor. So when did you become aware of that and how did you participate in that effort?

DELANO LEWIS: Marion called me.

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

DELANO LEWIS: I had heard rumblings that he was thinking about running and that I knew that possibly Sterling Tucker would run, who was the chairman of the Council at the time, and Walter Washington, who had been the appointed Mayor for a number of years and then the first elected Mayor, was going to run for reelection, and so I kept hearing there might be a tough 3-way race. But Marion called me, and I didn't get a call from Sterling Tucker, I didn't get a call from Walter Washington.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Okay.

DELANO LEWIS: I got a call from Marion, and he said, "Del, I'm going to run for Mayor, and I want you to help." And I said, "Why do you want to do that? You just got shot in the District Building." [Barry was shot when the Hanafi muslims invaded the District Building in January 1977]. You know. He said, "That's the reason." He said, "I might not be around. That's why I want to run."

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: And so we joked about it, we talked about it, and I said—we talked, and I said, "I will support you," and I was leaning in that direction anyway, but he said he wanted my political skill, we talked about my race for the Council, and he wanted my help. And so I felt very honored that he picked up the phone and made that call. And a part of that story is, as I was out there on the campaign trail, my boss—I had two bosses, Chuck Weikel, who took me to lunch, I worked for Chuck, and then in 1976, I took Chuck's job, so I was then Assistant VP reporting directly to the VP, Ralph Frey. And so Ralph called me in one day and said, "Del, we don't, as businesspeople—you must understand, we don't actively support candidates."

INTERVIEWER: Get into politics, huh?

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: "So we are a telephone service company and we provide service, we don't get involved in partisan politics. What are you doing?" I said, "Well, I think he's the best man for the job." So we had this discussion.

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: So I toned it down a bit, but I didn't stop, and they didn't give me too much of a difficulty. So I spent time campaigning for Marion, and it was an exciting campaign. It was an uphill battle. I had always thought he was the best person for the job. I felt he had a lot more vision. I knew how smart he was. I also knew he had the common touch, and those two—I mean, he had a lot of qualities, but being as smart as he was, but being the caring person that he was, and his common interaction with people were all the things that I had admired. So we hit it off very well, and I worked very hard for him and raised money for him. I think I was an assistant treasurer along with—when you get old—it was Ann, Ann Kinney.

INTERVIEWER: Ann Kinney, yes.

DELANO LEWIS: Ann Kinney. I think I was assistant to Ann, and she was the treasurer. So we were on the Finance Committee raising money for the Mayor.

INTERVIEWER: Well, talk a little bit about some of the people involved in the campaign. You mentioned Ann, but what were some of the other people who had prominent mention or did important work in the campaign?

DELANO LEWIS: That's a good question. I'm trying to—

BETTY KING: Max Berry.

DELANO LEWIS: Oh, yes, thank you very much. Max Berry [chair of the Barry Finance Committee in 1978] was certainly involved, and we were good friends from the Fauntroy days, so I had known Max. I'm sure that there were several Council people. I'm not sure where Polly was at that time, Polly Shackleton, but there were a number of Council people that supported Marion. I'm blanking a bit about who they were, but I got much more involved after he won. [In fact, very late in the campaign Polly endorsed Sterling].

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: Well, tell me a little bit about—you mentioned the three candidates, the three prominent candidates, who were Sterling [Tucker, incumbent chairman of the City Council] , Marion and—

BETTY KING: Walter [Washington, Incumbent DC Mayor]

INTERVIEWER: —Walter.

DELANO LEWIS: Right.

INTERVIEWER: What are some of the tensions between those candidates, and how were they perceived by the public?

DELANO LEWIS: Fascinating question. Marion was certainly viewed as the sort of upstart, and some viewed him as too much from the street, which was sort of the persona that he would like to portray because he always wanted to be close to the people.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely.

DELANO LEWIS: But some had connotations that the street was negative. He wasn't a part of the middle class. He wasn't part of "The Gold Coast," which is a section and part of Washington [east of Rock Creek Park, where affluent African-Americans lived].

INTERVIEWER: But more specifically, he was part of the [civil rights] Movement.

DELANO LEWIS: Exactly. Exactly.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

DELANO LEWIS: And Sterling Tucker represented certainly from—he was head of the Urban League, he certainly represented the black middle class. And then Walter Washington, obviously being the appointed Mayor, and then the elected Mayor represented a certain strata of D.C.'s upper middle class, if you would say.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

DELANO LEWIS: So there were some class divisions, and Marion did not fit into any of those class divisions, and so his persona and his movement was certainly very much grassroots and always has been.

So the thing that I do remember was election night when he won, which was just extraordinary, just exciting.

INTERVIEWER: But before you get there, I want to ask another question.

DELANO LEWIS: Okay. Go ahead.

INTERVIEWER: How about the media? Do you recall the reaction of the media to Barry and the Barry campaign?

DELANO LEWIS: Oh, you mentioned—you know, the other person that worked closely with Marion was Bob Johnson.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

DELANO LEWIS: Bob and I knew each other from Fauntroy's office.

INTERVIEWER: Bob Johnson—

DELANO LEWIS: Bob Johnson of Black Entertainment Television, right. And we were together in Fauntroy's office and we were also very much together in the Barry campaign. Dave Abramson of the PR firm who had worked with Walter and so forth. The media, you know, didn't really like Marion, in my judgment. And when we say "the media," mostly the *Washington Post* was the big piece of it.

INTERVIEWER: Right. That was the media at the time.

DELANO LEWIS: Yeah, exactly, exactly. And he didn't fit, in their judgment, in my thinking, what they wanted to see as Mayor of the city. And so I think he was always fighting that battle.

BETTY KING: And yet the *Washington Post* endorsed him and then wrote editorials, two editorials, saying why he should be elected.

DELANO LEWIS: At that time in '78? Interesting. Interesting.

BETTY KING: Endorsed him, and then they—there were three editorials altogether, the endorsement and then two others.

DELANO LEWIS: Well—

BETTY KING: I mean, came out, a bolt from the blue, a bolt from the blue.

DELANO LEWIS: Yeah. Yeah.

INTERVIEWER: Okay. And that person speaking is Betty King, who was in charge of—came to be known as the Barry army, and we'll know more about her later.

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: But the media, over time, I think, you know, he didn't fit the—

BETTY KING: No, you're right about that.

INTERVIEWER: The profile.

DELANO LEWIS: The profile, right, right.

INTERVIEWER: Exactly, exactly.

DELANO LEWIS: So he was always on an uphill battle there.

INTERVIEWER: Right. And actually I was going to ask you about some of the tensions that existed kind of in and outside of the campaign. And I think one of those really had to do with the perception of the public about Marion, who, as you said, was viewed as an upstart.

DELANO LEWIS: Mm-hmm.

INTERVIEWER: So do you remember any sort of, you know, back-and-forth of why Marion would be a good candidate or would not? And, you know, how was he perceived do you think in the inner circles?

DELANO LEWIS: Well, I can—I won't call any names, but I'll just give you the story because I think it gives you an example. And this person was what I would say was from black middle class and probably even more so from "The Gold Coast" and longtime Washingtonian, and this person had supported me for Council, and happened to be black, and this person wondered why I was supporting Marion, because he was really a hoodlum, and those were her exact words, and, "Why would you support him?" In other words, "You don't seem to be—," "I wouldn't have supported you if you were like Marion," et cetera.

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: That's sort of what she was saying. And, you know, I disputed that and told her that that might be her perception, but I felt and I've always felt that he was close to the people, and that was a real strength.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

DELANO LEWIS: But that's what he found—but it's interesting because there were many whites that supported Marion who didn't have that perception, who respected his caring for people of all walks of life, and he had a wide range of support over time. But there were those, and I'm sure there are some in the white community, but there were certainly those in the black community, who just felt he was not part of them.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, that's true, and I think it's important to mention that there was a very active solid middle class, upper middle class, black population in the city—

DELANO LEWIS: Right.

INTERVIEWER: —who was very skeptical—

DELANO LEWIS: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: —about Marion. And the question to the press, it was interesting that in their endorsement, the *Washington Post* did endorse Marion, which was a surprise to most people.

DELANO LEWIS: Yes, it was.

INTERVIEWER: And it was interesting because the campaign activity in Ward 3, which was mostly white and a lot of upper middle to really upper class population, was being wooed by

the campaign. And did you witness any of that, the kind of the racial, you know, divide in Marion's campaign and the reluctance of some of the blacks against the kind of enthusiasm of some of the whites?

DELANO LEWIS: Oh, yeah, that persisted. I don't recall, because I'm not so sure I was on the inner circle in that first campaign—

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: —so I don't have any firsthand—but those tensions persisted inside the campaign, and I do have a story that we can talk about later about those tensions rising. Yes, the fact that even among the blacks, there were some tensions about Marion and what he should and should not do that surfaced. And then there were tensions between blacks and whites. And so, you know, who was getting closer to Marion? and all those kinds of jealousies. Yes, those were there and probably persisted throughout his political career.

INTERVIEWER: All right. And on to election. And it was interesting, given those tensions, Ward 3 was won by Marion, much to the surprise of the entire population, and at that time, so goes the *Washington Post* in Ward 3 and so goes the election.

DELANO LEWIS: Right.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: But how about election night? And what was the mood at that time?

DELANO LEWIS: It was just absolutely joyous. And I was backstage with Marion and with a lot of other people, and he literally picked me up.

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: And he picked me up and he looked at me and he said, "Your stock will be high in the Telephone Company now."

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: He was right. He was right. And it was very, very true. And it was one of those very, very special times. And the next day, we had a department head meeting with Ralph Frey, my boss, and about 9 or 10 other department heads at one of the country clubs in Maryland. This was the day after the election. And my boss came up to me, Ralph, and I don't drink coffee, and he knows I didn't drink coffee, but he came up to me and says, "Mr. Lewis, can I get you a cup of coffee this morning?"

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: So Marion was right, I could do no wrong right after that. But I've got to tell you my favorite story about Marion was after he won, we were in his office, and he said that he wanted me to be his transition chairman to help him put his government together, and he—

INTERVIEWER: Right. I'm going to stop you right there. I want you to come back to that.

DELANO LEWIS: Okay. Will do. Okay.

INTERVIEWER: But I want you to talk about the long wait to determine the winner, although there was exuberance that night.

DELANO LEWIS: That's true. That's very true. I had forgotten.

INTERVIEWER: It took 3 weeks—

DELANO LEWIS: That's right.

INTERVIEWER: —before the count and the official determination of—

DELANO LEWIS: Official count, yeah. And I still don't know what that was about.

INTERVIEWER: Well, it was some inefficiency in one of our election—

DELANO LEWIS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Right, right, right.

INTERVIEWER: —but that did keep everybody on edge for a long time.

DELANO LEWIS: On edge for a long time. That's right.

INTERVIEWER: So I'm sorry. So—

DELANO LEWIS: No, no, no. I just said my memory gets hazy, but I do remember that wait. So he asked me to be his transition chairman, which was a great honor, and he said, and only in Marion's own fashion, he said, "I want you to be my transition chairman, and I want you to take 2 or 3 months off, and I want the Telephone Company to pay for it, because I'm the Mayor now, and this is a civic duty." So he said, "I want your strength and abilities, and I know you will help me bring in good people," and so on. So we had this great talk. So he said, "What I would like for you to do is to write a letter to your boss, to Ralph, Mr. Frey, and ask for your services to be my transition chairman for a number of weeks, and I'll sign it." I said, "Okay." So I put the

letter together, and Marion signed it. And within a few days, the letter got to Ralph, and my office—in my book, I talk about the vision that Ralph had for me in the company because his office was right here, and mine was right next to him. So I didn't see that for some time, but he had a vision for me in running the company. But in any event, he calls me, and I come around to his office, and he says, "I got this letter from the Mayor, the Mayor-elect, and he wants to have your services as a transition manager," and he said, "I think that's exciting, it's good for the Telephone Company, and it makes sense for me, it makes sense for us, and I have no problem with you taking as much time as you need." He says, "And by the way, why don't you write a letter to the Mayor and tell him that we accept and I'll sign it."

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: So I wrote both letters.

[Laughter.]

INTERVIEWER: That's pretty exciting. That move was so typical of Marion, that he had the vision to see what he wanted and just make it start, get it started, into action.

DELANO LEWIS: Yeah. Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Right. He did, he did, he did.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah. So what else do you think about that? Do you have any other thoughts about that campaign, just kind of wrapping the whole thing together?

DELANO LEWIS: Well, I thought it was just an extraordinary campaign because Marion was not favored to win that. I wasn't sure whether it would be Walter Washington or Sterling Tucker, and I think many people might have had a bet on Sterling because he had such broad middle class connections in the community. But Marion, again, we worked pretty hard in Ward 3, because I lived in Ward 3 as an African American, I lived in Ward 3, my family was there, my kids were raised in Ward 3. We worked very hard, and we were very pleased that we were able to bring support to Marion. But he did that on his own because he was a great campaigner, he was a great communicator. But he had a sense of what he wanted to do, he had a sense and vision for the city, but it was all related to helping people, it was all related to service. And when you look about what's going on in the city today and what's happened to the city today, many of those seeds were planted by Marion and his teams over the years, which I know you will get from this oral history, because his stamp is there.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. Absolutely.

DELANO LEWIS: But it was a very exciting campaign, and for me, being a political animal who wanted to be out there—oh, that was the other part of Marion. He said what he want—not

only did he want that night—because later he called me in for the transition, but that night he said, "Why don't you run for office?" He basically asked me what I wanted, you know.

INTERVIEWER: Right.

DELANO LEWIS: And I said, "I'm fine because my wife said if I ran again she was going to divorce me."

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: So, you know, I was pretty clear I wasn't going back into politics. But I said, "I really want you to be a good Mayor, and I'm in a good position in the Telephone Company, and I don't really want anything, I just want to help you be the best Mayor that you can. I'm not looking for a position."

INTERVIEWER: Right.

DELANO LEWIS: But he said, "Why don't you run?" He said, "You could run for my seat, and I endorse you, and you're in."

INTERVIEWER: Right.

[Laughter.]

DELANO LEWIS: So, you know, he talked to me about running again, and I said no, so I stayed with the Telephone Company and—

INTERVIEWER: So what else did you do in that first year, though, that you recall that was special or interesting? Or what did you do with that push you had gotten from the Telephone Company?

DELANO LEWIS: The first year was the transition and bringing people into the government and setting up groups of people to bring in good folks, and Elijah Rogers was one of our first appointments, as City Administrator, and he was in Richmond. So we started looking—

INTERVIEWER: Berkeley. He was at Berkeley at that time.

DELANO LEWIS: Was he at Berkeley?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

DELANO LEWIS: But he had been in Richmond?

INTERVIEWER: He had been in Richmond, yeah.

DELANO LEWIS: Okay. But we had a good team of people trying to identify strong leaders for various parts of Barry's administration and—

INTERVIEWER: And my own recollection of that year was those leaders that he brought in, those strong people, did serve his early years very well—

DELANO LEWIS: Very.

INTERVIEWER: —because they were a cadre of people that were unique to the city.

DELANO LEWIS: Right, right.

INTERVIEWER: So the transition did an excellent job—

DELANO LEWIS: Well, thank you. We brought Carol Thompson in and put her in the Housing position, I think, early on.

INTERVIEWER: Yes, yes.

DELANO LEWIS: And then she moved up and was very loyal in the administration.

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, yeah. Okay. Anything else you want to add? Any questions you think we ought to ask future interviewees?

DELANO LEWIS: No, I think we've covered it. As I said, it was one of those exciting times in life, and the victory was very sweet.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. I can certainly attest to that. Well, thank you very much for your contribution. And it will add a lot to the effort of recording this history.

DELANO LEWIS: Oh, good. Great. Well, thank you. I'm pleased to do it. Thank you.